

**Pteridology in Perspective**, edited by J. M. Camus, M. Gibby, and R. J. Johns. 1996. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3AB, Great Britain. ISBN 1-900347-09-1. £60. xx, 700 pp. Hardcover.

On 17–21 July, 1995, more than 100 of the world's pteridologists gathered in England for a symposium to honor one of the greatest of twentieth century pteridologists, Richard Eric Holttum (1895–1990). These meetings resulted in an impressive proceedings volume that in many ways reflects the state of present knowledge of ferns and fern allies.

In addition to introductory and symposium summary papers, as well as a section on the life and contributions of Dr. Holttum, the book is divided into six main sections, reflecting groups of presentations on similar topics that were sessions at the meetings. Within each section, the papers range from broad reviews to narrowly focused studies of individual species or groups. There is something here to stimulate and inform almost everyone with an interest in any aspect of pteridology, including floristics, conservation, biogeography, ecology, horticulture, anatomy, physiology, and of course, a variety of topics relating to classification and systematics.

Standouts among the many fine papers include Roos' summary of the state of pteridophyte floristics, Hennipman's account of problems with fern classification, Collinson's review of paleopteridology, Rothwell's summary of the paleobotanical aspects of fern phylogeny, and Stevenson and Loconte's study of higher level fern phylogeny. In particular, Haufler's exploration of species concepts and speciation in pteridophytes should be required reading for any introductory plant systematics class and apparently will lead to a symposium on the topic at the next International Botanical Congress.

My main disappointment with these proceedings is that a number of the contributors chose to submit only abstracts to the volume, rather than full papers, and that some of the papers read as though they are abridgments of research to be published more fully elsewhere. The abstracted presentations are not differentiated from the real papers in the Table of Contents, so the reader faces potential disappointment when a particular title captures his or her interest. On the other hand, if every contributor had submitted full papers, the contents might not have fit into a single volume.

Purchasers of the volume should also be wary of missing pages. My review copy had blank pages sprinkled throughout, mostly in the bibliographic sections at the ends of papers. Otherwise, the volume seems cleanly edited and is nicely bound. If it indeed is viewed as a reflection on the state of fern knowledge, then pteridologists may be proud of their achievements during the past few decades. In many cases, however, the book also provides clear indications of areas that still urgently require further research. This important summary of pteridology belongs on the bookshelf of every student of these plants.—GEORGE YATSKIEVYCH, Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St. Louis, MO 63166-0299.